



**Lawyers' Committee for  
Civil Rights Under Law**

1401 New York Avenue, NW  
Suite 400  
Washington, DC 20005-2124

Tel: 202/662-8600  
888/299-5227  
Fax: 202/783-0857  
Web: <http://www.lawyerscommittee.org>

Direct Dial:

**Co-Chairs**

D. Stuart Meiklejohn  
John S. Skilton

**Secretary**

Robert A. Murphy

**Treasurer**

William L. Robinson

**Counsel**

Nicholas T. Christakos

**Executive Director**

Barbara R. Arnwine

**Regional Vice-Chairs**

**Midwest Region**

Fay Clayton  
Teresa J. Kimker

**Northeastern Region**

Harold C. Pachios  
Neil V. McKittrick

**Mid-Atlantic Region**

John S. Kiernan  
Robert C. Sheehan

**Southeastern Region**

Robert E. Harrington  
William E. Hoffmann

**Western Region**

Jack W. London  
Bradley S. Phillips  
Paul F. Eckstein

**Chesapeake Region**

George W. Jones  
Patricia A. Brannan

July 20, 2004

Dear Representative:

As the U.S. House of Representatives prepares to vote on the Marriage Protection Act (H.R. 3313), the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights urges you to oppose this extreme legislation.

For more than 40 years, the Lawyers' Committee has provided legal services to fight racial discrimination and secure equal justice under law. The existence of an independent judiciary, free from political or public pressure, has been essential to our success in obtaining equal access and resources for underrepresented communities. The Marriage Protection Act seriously undermines the concept of judicial independence and separation of powers by depriving all federal courts the ability to consider challenges to the Defense of Marriage of Act. This unconstitutional attempt to strip the federal courts of their jurisdiction represents a dangerous attack on our system of government.

Independent courts led the way during the early civil rights struggles to desegregate our schools, protect the right to vote, and allow blacks to serve on juries. Despite subsequent criticism and harsh public outcry, efforts to overturn these critical civil rights cases were rejected by the Congress. The Marriage Protection Act represents yet another misguided attempt to manipulate the power of the federal judicial system.

For these reasons, I urge you to oppose H.R. 3313.

Sincerely,

Barbara R. Arnwine  
Executive Director  
Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights  
Under Law